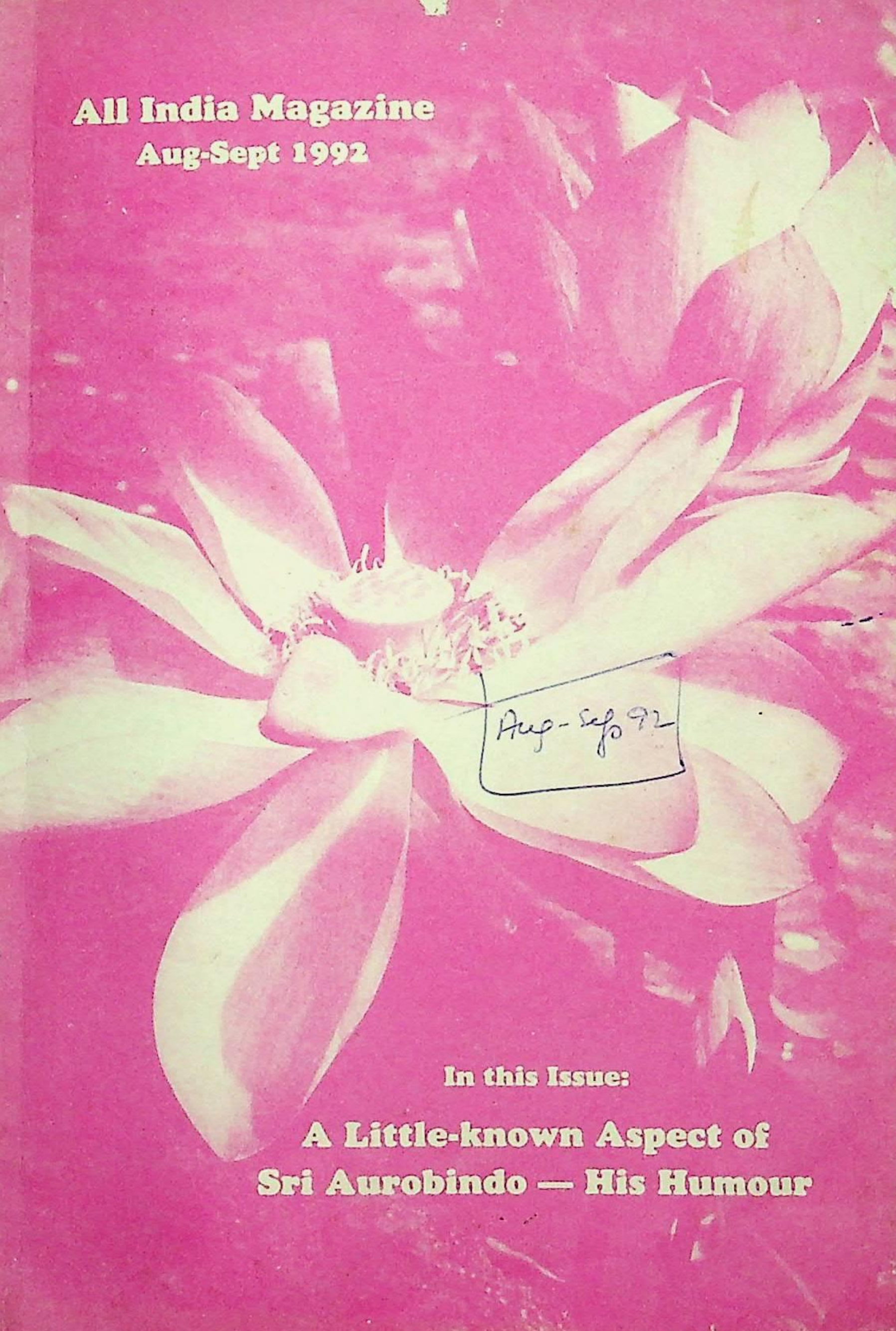
All India Magazine

Aug-Sept 1992



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A Little-known Aspect of Sri Aurobindo — His Humour

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A Selection From

Dr. Nirodbaran's "Sri Aurobindo's Humour"

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Sense of humour? It is the salt of existence. Without it the world would have got utterly out of balance – it is unbalanced enough already – and rushed to blazes long ago.

– Sri Aurobindo

Sri Aurobindo (1918-20)

Some Examples of Sri Aurobindo's Humour

2.1.35

MYSELF[1]: I am rather puzzled by X's failures [in Sādhanā] or upsettings. I fear sometimes the same fate may overtake me.

SRI AUROBINDO: I suppose you always avoided getting into a railway train because there might be a collision, or into a steamer for similar reasons and certainly you would never dare go in an aeroplane!

MYSELF: All these cases of failures prove what? I fear the same reasons may operate on me and I may behave exactly like an insane person.

SRI AUROBINDO: What you say may apply to everybody because everybody has things in him which conflict with the Yoga. Logical conclusion: Nobody should try anything in which anybody has failed or in which there is a possibility of failure! I am afraid most human activities would stop on that principle except আহার, নিদ্রা ও মিথুন [food, sleep and sex] and perhaps only the first two. But after all not even these – for people die in their sleep and others die of their food by poison, indigestion or otherwise. So to be safe one must neither eat, sleep nor do anything else – much less do Yoga. Q.E.D.

5.1.35

MYSELF: I come to do Yoga with all sincerity but end by being a tool in depression's hands. Isn't it tragic and pathetic? This side of the shield I request you to see.

SRI AUROBINDO: Gracious heavens! you *are* really a poet.

[1] Nirodbaran

MYSELF: Your caustic satire about the railways is, with all apology, a little beside the point. Firstly, I have dared Yoga.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why not go on daring instead of wailing because there is no safety?

MYSELF: In railways etc. the journey is safe; the hostile forces are not so villainous. But even after a Heruclean effort, the path of Yoga is not a jot easier.

SRI AUROBINDO: You ought to read the *Matin*. Every now and then a tremendous collision and holocaust. I admit that in India railway is slow and scanty and therefore more though not quite safe. Anyway, what about aeroplanes?

MYSELF: It is very problematic, however, as to how many will reach your Heaven alive, like Yudhishthir.

SRI AUROBINDO: And his dog, you have forgotten the dog.

30.1.35

MYSELF: Are women created only for the preservation of the species and the race?

SRI AUROBINDO: *Much as doctors are*? Only of course the doctor does not produce the species out of himself.

MYSELF: It is said that woman is man's guru and shakti. Sounds queer, doesn't it?

SRI AUROBINDO: No more queer than the husband being a god (husband-god, *pati-devatā*). The husband is supposed to be the wife's proper and only guru, so why should not the wife return that compliment and be the man's guru? Tit for tat.

MYSELF: Is this shakti needed to make a man complete and whole?

SRI AUROBINDO: Is man needed to make a woman

complete and whole?

MYSELF: As for shakti, we can get any amount of it from above, can't we?

SRI AUROBINDO: It doesn't look like it – most of the shakti is either not received or spilled. It does not follow that you should all go hunting for shaktis to complete you.

MYSELF: I haven't left any marginal space in my writing, because I want an exhaustive answer from you. The book can wait till Sunday, Sir.

SRI AUROBINDO: As you put no margin, I have put interstitials instead of marginals.

31.1.35

MYSELF: I am sending you a diagnosis of the ailment of my first patient. It is bad luck for me to have to tackle such a difficult case at the very outset of my medical work in the Ashram. But why do you have to spend so much Force, when you can do the whole job by a word? I mean, why not cut short our labour and the patient's discomfort by launching your তথাস্তু[1] from the higher Divine Consciousness? I hope my patient gets cured soon by your Force.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is a *test case*, I suppose! But why so strong on prestige? I should have thought everybody knows that doctors have to be guessing all the time and that cure is a matter of hit or miss. If you hit often you are a clever doctor – or if you kill people brilliantly, then also. It reduces itself to that.

I did not expect you to take my তথাস্তু with such grim seriousness. Speaking semi-seriously, I am not here to do miracles to order, but to try to get in a new

[1] Let it be so. (Tathāstu)

consciousness somewhere in the world – which is itself however to attempt a miracle. If physical miracles happen to tumble in the process, well and good, but you can't present your medical pistol in my face and call on me to stand and deliver. As for the Force, application of my force, short of the supramental, means always a struggle of forces and the success depends (1) on the strength and persistency of the force put out (2) the receptivity of the subject (3) the sanction of the Unmentionable – I beg your pardon, I meant the Unnameable, Ineffable, Unknowable. X's physical consciousness is rather obstinate, as you have noticed, and therefore not too receptive. It may feel the Mother inside it, but to obey her will or force is less habitual for it.

2.2.35

MYSELF: I am still wondering why there should be doctors and a dispensary at all! Isn't it a paradox – the Divine sending his disciples to the human physician?

SRI AUROBINDO: Rubbish! This is a world of the play of forces, sir, and the Doctor is a force. So why should not the Divine use him? Have you realised that if the Divine did everything, there would be no world, only a show of marionettes?

MYSELF: D also thinks the same as I do; why is it not possible for the Force to cure the patients? Let the Dispensary go to the devils!

SRI AUROBINDO: Thank you for your suggestions all the same – especially about the Dispensary and the devils. X almost sent it there, but it went to you instead.

11.2.35

MYSELF: I am a little taken aback to hear that a 'certain note of persiflage' dilutes the grave discussion I am having with you.

SRI AUROBINDO: Look here, don't tell me that because you are a doctor, therefore you can't understand a joke. It would have the effect of making me dreadfully serious.

MYSELF: I am sorry I can't detect the adulteration of the Divine philosophy with the persiflage. My medical appliance is hardly capable of doing it.

SRI AUROBINDO: A sense of humour (not grim) ought to be a sufficient appliance.

MYSELF: No doubt, I enjoy heartily the humour but I should like to be able to suck up the cream and give the rest its proper place.

SRI AUROBINDO: The cream = the persiflage – the rest is the solemn part of the argument.

MYSELF: I would like to know something about my "bad logic" before I write anything further to you.

SRI AUROBINDO: Helps to finding out your bad logic. I give instances expressed or implied in your reasonings.

Bad logic No. 1. Because things have not been, therefore they can never be.

No. 2. Because Sri Aurobindo is an Avatar, his sadhana can have no meaning for humanity.

No. 3. What happens in Sri Aurobindo's sadhana cannot happen in anybody else's sadhana (i.e. neither descent nor realisation, nor transformation, nor intuitions, nor budding of new powers or faculties) – because Sri Aurobindo is an Avatar and the sadhaks are not.

No. 4. A street beggar cannot have any spirituality or at least not so much as, let us say, a University graduate – because well, one doesn't know why the hell not.

No. 5. (and last because of want of space.) Because I am a doctor I can't see a joke when it is there.

23.2.35

MYSELF: The Overmind seems so distant from us, and your Himalayan austerity and grandeur takes my breath away, making my heart palpitate!

SRI AUROBINDO: O rubbish! I am austere and grand, grim and stern! every blasted thing I never was! I groan in an un-Aurobindonian despair when I hear such things. What has happened to the common sense of all of you people? In order to reach the Overmind it is not at all necessary to take leave of this simple but useful quality. Common sense by the way is not logic (which is the least commonsense-like thing in the world), it is simply looking at things as they are without inflation or deflation – not imagining wild imaginations – or for that matter despairing "I know not why" despairs.

25.4.35

MYSELF: Lack of interest and energy, disinclination to go to hospital – this is my condition for the last few days. I took a cup of tea and the energy came back.

SRI AUROBINDO: Sympathise with you. There was a time when I was like that. Teaified cells – instead of deified.

MYSELF: But what's the reason? Vital resistance, physical inertia or fatigue or what?

SRI AUROBINDO: Gandhian uncooperating passive resistance of the vital disgusted to have to do the same thing regularly? Objection to rules – what? Discipline it.

MYSELF: The whole thing came to a climax. I wanted to go out for a walk by way of diversion but J said that the Mother takes away something from the vital.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why on earth should she?

MYSELF: Everybody seems to be working with so much interest, and look at me. What a curious mixture I am!

SRI AUROBINDO: Too many ingredients in too small and unstable proportions?

MYSELF: In any case, break this old being. Sir, and let something emerge, whatever it be!

SRI AUROBINDO: All right; let's have a try. Hammer, hammer, hammer! Only the being in question is a little – shall we say, solid?

29.4.35

MYSELF: I am plunged in a sea of dryness and am terribly thirsty for something. Along with it, waves of old desires. Any handy remedy?

SRI AUROBINDO: Eucharistic injection from above, purgative rejection below; liquid diet, psychic fruit juice, milk of the spirit.

30.4.35

MYSELF: Your prescription, Sir, is splendid, but the patient is too poor to pay. I feel I am the least fitted for the path. The God-seekers whose lives I have read reveal what a great thirst they had for the Divine!

SRI AUROBINDO: And what deserts they had to pass through without getting the thirst satisfied? The lives left out that?

MYSELF: Whatever you may say, Sir, the path of

Yoga is absolutely dry and specially that of Integral Yoga!

SRI AUROBINDO: One has to pass through the desert some time – doesn't follow that the whole path is like that.

MYSELF: For this Yoga, one must have the heart of a lion, the mind of a Sri Aurobindo and the vital of a Napolean.

SRI AUROBINDO: Good Lord! Then I am off the list of the candidates – for I have neither the heart of a lion nor the vital of Napolean.

MYSELF: You may say that when the psychic comes to the front, the path becomes a great Trunk Road of Roses. But it may take years and years!

SRI AUROBINDO: Does not matter how long it takes – it crops up one day or another.

MYSELF: And who knows one may not simply pine away in the dry desert before that?

SRI AUROBINDO: No necessity to carry out any such disagreeable programme.

MYSELF: Have I the necessary requirements for the sadhana? The only thing I seem to have is a deep respect for you, which almost all people have today.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is good that for accuracy's sake you put in the 'almost'.

4.5.35

MYSELF: I have again become the victim of people's tongue. I came to know that someone was imputing most abject motives to some of my actions, without my giving any cause of offence. I am not even familiar with the person.

SRI AUROBINDO: Do you think people need a "cause"

for criticising others? It is done for the heavenly Ananda of the thing in itself. পরনিন্দা[1] is to the human vital sweeter than all the fruits of Paradise.

MYSELF: Can you explain why these poisonous shafts of criticism are thrown at me, without any reason at all?

SRI AUROBINDO: Imagination and inference and joy of the perspicuous psychologist and joy of fault finding – and several other vital joys and joy of communicating to others is usually called gossip; quite enough to explain. No other reason wanted.

15.9.35

MYSELF: Another point; have you written anywhere what would be the nature of the physical transformation?

SRI AUROBINDO: I have not, I carefully avoided that ticklish subject.

MYSELF: What would it be like? Change of pigment? Mongolian features into Aryo-Greco? Bald head into luxuriant growth? Old men into gods of eternal youth?

SRI AUROBINDO: Why not seven tails with an eighth on the head – everybody different colours, blue, magenta, indigo, green, scarlet, etc.; hair luxuriant but vermilion and flying erect skywards; other details to match. Amen.

18.9.35

MYSELF: I am still in the 'slough of Despond'. Really, Sir, no belief or faith in effort at all. I will choose the mulish revolting way and that would be the easiest. What do you say?

[1] Slander.

SRI AUROBINDO: I am inclined to say "Pshaw!" Have more faith, not less.

MYSELF: Apart from this, I have observed that whenever I communicate an experience to you, the next moment it stops. I hope my Guru is not in any way connected with this! I remember a story of my childhood: I was dining with my father when I was obliged to go out, I turned round and said, "Papa, see you don't eat my fish!" Well, fathers may not, but Gurus?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, sir, I don't eat your fish. I have oceans of fish at my disposal and have no need to consume your little sprats. It is Messrs H.F. (hostile forces) who do that – the Dasyus or robbers. You display your fine new pen-knife and they say, "Ah! he is fond of his fine new pen-knife, is he? We'll show him!" and they filch it at the first opportunity.

MYSELF: Do tell us how the Supermind will make us great sadhaks overnight. We are hanging all our hopes on its "tail", which, you said, is descending.

SRI AUROBINDO: If you expect to become supramental overnight, you are confoundedly mistaken. The tail will keep the H.F. at a respectful distance and flap at you until you consent to do things in a reasonable time instead of taking 200 centuries over such a step as you seem to want to do just now. More than that I refuse to say. What is a reasonable time in the supramental view of things I leave you to discover.

MYSELF: Your Overmental Force seems to have utterly failed in cases of people like us. Where then is the chance of this Mr. Supramental who is only a step higher?

SRI AUROBINDO: Overmind is obliged to respect the freedom of the individual – including his freedom to be perverse, stupid, recalcitrant and slow. Supermind is

not merely a step higher than Overmind – it is beyond the line, that is a different consciousness and power beyond the mental limit.

MYSELF: Please don't think of what India is going to do with her Independence. Give her that first, and then let her decide her fate for herself. Independence anyhow – your Supermind will do the rest.

SRI AUROBINDO: You are a most irrational creature. I have been trying to logicise and intellectualise you, but it seems in vain. Have I not told you that the independence is all arranged for and will evolve itself all right? Then what's the use of my bothering about that any longer? It's what she will do with her independence that is not arranged for – and so it is that about which I have to bother. To drag in the Supermind by the tail here is perfectly irrelevant. We have been talking all the time on an altogether infra-supramental basis – down down low in the intellect with an occasional illumined intuitive or overmental flash here and there. Be faithful to the medium, if you please. If you do not become perfectly and luminously logical and rational, how can you hope to become a candidate for the next higher stage even? Be a little practical and reasonable.

19.9.35

MYSELF: But when did I tell you, Sir, that I expect to become *supramental* overnight? Good Gracious! Don't I realise that being an ass myself, it is not in my power to do so, – nor do I conjure up any such phantasms of hope to cross the 'Ass's Bridge'?

SRI AUROBINDO: You said "overnight", sir, "overnight". It was a logical inference from your desire to

become a great sadhak overnight. In this remarkable correspondence I am not using intuition – I am proceeding strictly by mental (not supramental) reason and logic. A "great sadhak" in the supramental Yoga means a supramental – or ought to according to all rules of logic.

Asses seldom realise that. If they see a thistle on the other side, they try at once to go after it – so here again your logic fails.

MYSELF: You have admitted your failure in intellectualising me; now I am waiting to hear at any time, the admission that all your attempts to make me a yogi seem to be in vain!

SRI AUROBINDO: Perhaps that is because for the sheer fun of it I tried the impossible, intending not to succeed – because if you had really become luminously intellectual and rational, why you would have been so utterly surprised at yourself that you would have sat down open-mouthed on the way and never moved a step farther.

MYSELF: From all my fulminations, please don't understand that I am craving for the Supermind or the Absolute. I just want an inner calm and remain unshaken like Lord Shiva himself, in all circumstances.

SRI AUROBINDO: And yet you say you are not after the Absolute!!!

MYSELF: About the Supermind, I only wanted to know how this gentleman is going to help us. Minimising our depressions? Breaking our difficulties? Keeping off the waves of the subconscient? etc., etc.?

SRI AUROBINDO: He can do any or all of these things. But we can leave him to fix his programme after he has got on his feet (subsequent to the bump of the descent) and has had time to look about him.

MYSELF: I know my nature too well to hope for any Supermind, Overmind or any other Mind – overnight. Still you say that I am "an irrational, illogical, impractical creature"!

SRI AUROBINDO: Well, but you talked of becoming a great sadhak (if not supramental) overnight. So unless you withdraw that –

MYSELF: Some people say that the Supermind will establish a direct connection with the Psychic and spur it to come to the front quicker.

SRI AUROBINDO: Well, it can do that, but it is not bound to do that only and take no other way.

MYSELF: When I said apropos of India's independence, that your Supermind will do the rest, I only meant that before India has any chance of becoming free, the Supermind will descend and guide India's destiny.

SRI AUROBINDO: How do you know it will do that? It may simply look on, twist its moustache and say "Ahem"!

MYSELF: I would like to report that my head is very heavy, painful, body feverish and a painful boil in the nose.

SRI AUROBINDO: Is it the result of your mind bumblebeeing too much around the tail of the Supramental?

MYSELF: I send you a photograph of mine along with the note-book. What do you think of it, Sir? – A Mussolini gone morbid? Anyhow it looks as if you have at last succeeded in putting some intellect in this brain-box of mine!

SRI AUROBINDO: Good heavens, what a gigantic forehead they have given you! The Himalaya and the Atlantic in one mighty brow! also, with the weird supramental light upon it! Well, well, you ought to be

able to cross the Ass's bridge with that. Or do you think the bridge will break down under its weight?

20.9.35

MYSELF: But really, Sir, I never expected you to take my "overnight" so literally. As a matter of fact I did not mean anything precise and particular. You could have allowed for a little exuberance in metaphor, surely!

SRI AUROBINDO: Don't understand your deep expressions – you did not mean that it would happen rapidly and suddenly? "Overnight" in English means that, – if you had some extraordinary supramental meaning (beyond the mental and out of the human time-sense) in your mind, it is a different matter, and then I express my awe-struck, heart-felt, flabbergasted regrets, pleading only as excuse to my inability to grasp such a deep and novel use of the language. May I ask, very humbly, what you did mean, if not a sudden and rapid development into great sadhaks?

MYSELF: Is it because you use only the mental? Suppose we use your expression "Very near the tail of the Supramental" in our human time-sense?

SRI AUROBINDO: I supposed that you would take it as a metaphor or as anyone reading English in the ordinary way, would do. No need of a superhuman time-sense or timeless sense to interpret the phrase, although it seems it is needed in order to understand your "overnight".

MYSELF: I had a temperature of 100° all day. I fear the Supramental gave me some severe lashes with his tail! Arjava threatens that people will lose all faith in doctors unless I cure myself quickly.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not at all. You are simply "not well"

– the reason you as a doctor ought to discover. Unless you have committed a secret sin (of one kind or another) and the temperature is a foretaste of the heat hereafter. But that also is for you to see.

21.9.35

MYSELF: By that cursed phrase, "being a great sadhak overnight", as I said, I did not mean anything precise. There might have been something *in the subconscious*, perhaps an idea about X being a great sadhak.

SRI AUROBINDO: There you go again! "Great sadhaks", "advanced sadhaks", "big sadhaks", like X, Y and Z? When shall I hear the last of these ego-building phrases which I have protested against times without number? And you object to being beaten!

MYSELF: I regret to find that this phrase has led to so much froth. If you take such things seriously you will find many occasions for beating me and one day in sheer despondency you might utter, "Useless! useless! All pains, all efforts in vain, in vain!"

SRI AUROBINDO: It looks like it! "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit," saith the Preacher! I fear all Preachers have to come to that in the end – especially the vanity of correspondence.

25.9.35

MYSELF: I understand your protesting against "great" or "big" sadhaks; but why against "advanced" sadhaks? It is a fact that some are more advanced than others.

SRI AUROBINDO: Advanced indeed! Pshaw! Because one is 3 inches ahead of another, you must make classes of advanced and non-advanced? Advanced has

the same puffing egoistic resonance as "great" or "big". It leads to all sorts of stupidities, rajasic self-appreciating egoism in some, tamasic self-depreciating egoism in others, round-eyed wonderings why X an advanced sadhak, one 3 inches ahead of Y, should stumble, tumble or fumble while Y, 3 inches behind X, still plods heavily and steadily on, etc., etc. Why sir, the very idea in X that he is an advanced sadhak (like the Pharisee "I thank thee, O Lord, that I am not as other unadvanced disciples") would be enough to make him fumble, stumble and tumble. So no more of that, sir, no more of that.

14.11.35

MYSELF: No meal as yet, Sir. It is 9.30 p.m. No sleep, no rest. And still you express your surprise and grudge at a doctor being given a certificate!

SRI AUROBINDO: Poor doctors who give up rest and sleep and food, yet remain all unwept, unhonoured and unsung. Never mind! Perhaps in heaven they will have a big address given them one mile long and signed by all the angels – cherubin and seraphim together.

13.1.36

MYSELF:

"Trickle, trickle O mighty Force divine,
Pour, pour thy white moon dreams
Into my stomach, heart and intestine
In little silver streams."

SRI AUROBINDO: Two most damnable blunders, sir. "Intestine" is stressed on the second syllable and pronouned *intéstine*, so how the blazes is it going to

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rhyme with divine? A doctor misstressing "intestine" – shame! How are you going to cure people if you put wrong stress on their anatomical parts?

Second blunder –

Yogically, psycho-physically etc., etc., stomach, heart and intestine lodge the vital movements, not the physical consciousness – it is there that anger, fear, love, hate and all the other psychological privileges of the animal tumble about and upset the physical and moral digestion. The Muladhara is the seat of the physical consciousness proper. So you have to emend the third line into "Invade the mourning / yearning / yearnful bottom of my spine". That will make it poetically beautiful and psychologically correct.

14.1.36

MYSELF: I don't see any vestige of a yogi in me. It will be 3 years in February since I have come here, and I haven't seen even 3 signs! It is your letters, Sir, that have bound me.

SRI AUROBINDO: What the deuce is three years in Yoga? There are people who have to wait twice or three times or four times that time before they get the real sign. A child of nine might say, "Look here, I have been studying for 2 years and yet nobody has decided to propose me as the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University."

13.2.36

MYSELF: Spoke wrathfully? I thought I am a very calm and peaceful man. But I'll tell you what happened....

SRI AUROBINDO: Well, I don't know why but you have the reputation of being a fierce and firebrand doctor who considers it a sin for patients to have an illness; you may be right but tradition demands that a doctor should be soft like butter, soothing like treacle, sweet like sugar and jolly like jam. So!

14.2.36

MYSELF: If the tradition demands, we shall try to be softer than butter but we may be too tempting and evoke a response from the patient's palate for making delicious toast. Who will save us then?

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course, if you are too, too sweet. You must draw the line somewhere.

MYSELF: A doctor says that one has to be firm, stern and hard with women. They may not like it superficially, but they enjoy it and stick to the doctor who gives them hard knocks. Cave-man spirit?

Dr. X seems no less a firebrand than myself, but women seem to like him.

SRI AUROBINDO: He must have been a he-man. She-women enjoy it from he-men. But all women are not she-women and all men are not he-men. Moreover, there is an art as well as a nature in that kind of thing which you lack.

He's a he-man. Even so the women have ended by saying 'No more of X'.

MYSELF: You referred to "circumstances being exceptional" as regards my early success in English versification. But how are they exceptional?

Let me know
How 'tis so
A dullard like me

Bursting like a sea
With the heart of the Muse
Makes his rhythm fuse?

SRI AUROBINDO:

You are opening, opening, opening
Into a wider, wider scopening
That fills me with a sudden hopening
That I may carry you in spite of gropening
Your soul into the supramental ropening.

N.B. Surrealist poetry.

28.2.36

MYSELF: If by "widening" you mean that I have made a mighty *conscious* effort, well, that's just not it.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, I did not mean that.

MYSELF: But with the little effort I have made, I can't get even a glimpse of the Presence!

SRI AUROBINDO: But you don't widen! If you did (I suppose you are too lazy to do so) you would get a glimpse and more.

MYSELF: The laws of its coming and going are unknown. I feel happiness and peace, and I write – you say I have widened.

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course. If you had not widened, how could the blessed thing get in? Of course whether you widened yourself or it widened you and forced its way is another matter.

MYSELF: It goes as it comes.

SRI AUROBINDO: It always does, you know. But it comes back too, if you allow it.

MYSELF: The tragedy is that I know nothing of its reason of arrival and departure. It has no railway time-table!

SRI AUROBINDO: No reason. Only unreason or super-reason. Keep your end up and it will arrive again and some day perhaps after Jack-in-the-boxing like that sufficiently, one day it will sit down and say, "Here I am for good. Send for the priest and let's be married." With these things that is the law and the rule and the reason and rhyme of it and everything.

MYSELF: At times I think why the devil do I bother my head with poetry? Poetry, poetry, poetry! Have I come here for blessed poetry?

SRI AUROBINDO: You haven't. But the poetry has come for you. So why shout?

27.3.36

MYSELF: C has sent a rupee to buy something for you. But your needs are so few and you are so strict about hygiene. At times I wonder why the Divine is so meticulously particular as regards contagion, infection. Is he vulnerable to the virus, bacilli, microbes, etc.?

SRI AUROBINDO: And why on earth should you expect the Divine to feed himself on germs and bacilli and poisons of all kinds? Singular theology yours!

MYSELF:

> So what shall I buy
> To suit the Divine taste?
> But aren't all same to him – paste
> Or pudding, butter, cheese or mutton-pie?

SRI AUROBINDO: Good Lord! I hope you are not plotting to send any such things here! Of butter and cheese I have more than I want and pudding and mutton-pie are banished from my menu.

29.3.36

MYSELF: Throughout the history of my writing, you know that the Above has been stingily charitable to me so that all my works – very few though – have been corroded with the marks of my labour. But even a beginner should be lured by more glimpses than has been done in my case.

SRI AUROBINDO: System of lollipops? You won't travel to London unless you are given frequent glimpses of London before even you reach Bombay? Otherwise you will say oh! what a bother and give up?

MYSELF: Look at D – you yourself have admitted that he had a very easy flow as soon as he started writing.

SRI AUROBINDO: Never in my life I admitted that.

MYSELF: Look at N. Do you know he writes 200-300 lines a day!

SRI AUROBINDO: Not at all if you refer to his poetry – As soon as he started writing here, yes. That is because he caught instantly the tail of the Horse – or the Force. You seem to read what I write in a queer way.

MYSELF: With your silent consciousness it should be possible to draw inspiration from the highest planes with the least concentration.

SRI AUROBINDO: The highest planes are not so accommodating as all that. If they were so, why should it be so difficult to bring down and organise the Supermind in the physical consciousness? What happy-go-lucky fancy-web-spinning ignoramuses you all are! You speak of silence, consciousness, overmental, supramental, etc., as if they were so many electric buttons you have only to press and there you are. It may be one day but meanwhile I have to discover everything about the working of all possible modes of electricity, all the laws, possibilities, perils, etc., construct modes

of connection and communication, make the whole far-wiring system, try to find out how it can be made foolproof and all that in the course of a single lifetime. And I have to do it while my blessed disciples are firing off their gay or gloomy *a priori* reasonings at me from a position of entire irresponsibility and expecting me to divulge everything to them not in hints but at length. Lord God *in omnibus*!

23.4.36

MYSELF: Please ask Mother to give some blessings to this hopeless self.

SRI AUROBINDO:

R/

Vin. Ashirv.	m.VII
Recept. Chlor.	gr.XXV
Aqua jollity	ad.lib.
Tinc. Faith	m.XV
Syr. Opt.	Zss
12 doses every hour	

(Signature)

24.4.36

MYSELF: What's this second item in your prescription, Sir? Too Latinic for my poor knowledge.

SRI AUROBINDO: Chlorate of Receptivity.

MYSELF: And I would put Aqua at the end to make it an absolutely pucca academical prescription.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but I thought of the two last ingredients afterwards.

MYSELF: And 12 doses every hour – these tinctures and vinums?

SRI AUROBINDO: 12 doses – every hour (one each hour. Plagiarised from your language, sir.)

MYSELF: Where is the cost to be supplied from?

SRI AUROBINDO: Gratis – for the poor.

19.5.36

MYSELF: Seeing all these failures in this Yoga, I sometimes wonder if any one here is attaining anything at all; has anybody realised the Divine? Please don't ask me what I mean by the Divine; it is difficult to explain these things!

SRI AUROBINDO: Why shouldn't I ask? If you mean the Vedantic realisation, several have had it. Bhakti realisation also. If I were to publish the letters on sadhana experiences that come to me, people would marvel and think that the Ashram was packed full of great Yogis! Those who know something about Yoga would not mind about the dark periods, eclipses, hostile attacks, despairings, falls, for they know that these things happen to Yogis. Even the failures would have become Gurus, if I had allowed it, with circles of Shishyas! X did become one. Y of course. But all that does not count here, because what is a full realisation outside, is here only a beginning of Siddhi. Here the test is transformation of the nature, psychic, spiritual, finally supramental. That and nothing else is what makes it so difficult.

MYSELF: X says he has been eight years here; yet no peace, at times only joy and that also joy of literary creation.

SRI AUROBINDO: Eight years? Amateur Yogis! Those who know something about Yoga would count 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 years as nothing for the preliminary work of

preparation and self-purification. That was X's bane. He expected to conquer heaven in a gallop, but there was only one way of doing it, complete abdication of self, and that he refused and probably could not do. Then when the gallop could not succeed, he has been wrestling and groaning ever since – meditation, japa, prayer with only one idea "when is it coming? when is it coming? why is it not coming? why is it not coming? of course it won't come. It will never come, never, never." And of course it doesn't. That is not the way....

MYSELF: But poetry he says is work, not in yoga. If that could give the Divine any number of literary people would have it.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is like him and most of the sadhaks. All hold grip to their own ideas, follow their own conceptions about Yoga. Reason! logic! As for the ways pointed out by the Guru, all supramental nonsense. The surprising thing is that anyone succeeds here.

13.8.36

MYSELF: C has sent some money to buy some garlands for you. You can bless him without garlands, can't you?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, of course – quite able.

5.9.36

MYSELF: Again I have a blessed boil inside the left nostril – painful. I feel feverish. A dose of Force, please!

SRI AUROBINDO: As the modernist poet says

O blessed blessed boil within the nostril,
How with pure pleasure dost thou make thy boss thrill!

He sings of thee with sobbing trill and cross trill,
O blessed blessed boil within the nostril.

I hope this *stotra*[1] will propitiate the boil and make it disappear, satisfied.

6.9.36

MYSELF: What a powerfully effective 'stotra'! The boil couldn't but burst.... I couldn't make out one word. Is it 'make thy *bows* thrill'?

SRI AUROBINDO: I thought you'd boggle over it. 'Boss' man 'boss' = yourself as owner, proprietor, patron, capitalist of the boil.

27.11.36

MYSELF: A perfect sonnet! What do you think of the first line, Sir? "My clouded soul, do you know where you are?" Flat? and the *clouded* soul?

SRI AUROBINDO: Flat? by God, sir, abysmal! The soul can get as clouded as it likes but do you know where you are? In Pondicherry, sir, in Pondicherry – the most clouded soul can know that. You might just as well now write "My friend, do you know that you are an ass?" and call it metre and poetry.

Note well –

1) It is absolutely unrhythmical to stress a number of unstressed syllables in a line suppressing the true accents – such broken backed lines are unmetrical and intolerable e.g.

Do yóu/know ún/der thé/garb óf/the night.

You might just as well write,

[1] Hymn

They weré/married tó/gethér/in á pantrý/

or

Oh, why/do you/perpé/trate súch/horŕors/

MYSELF: Does the trochee in the word 'vision', spoil the rhythm?

SRI AUROBINDO: By God it does. If the syllable before were an accented one the trochee would be all right. But this can only read,

But how/can lim/ited vi/sion surmise/?

A quadruped, sir, a quadruped.

MYSELF: What about the thought, sequence, etc.? Please show the defects with the opinion and criticism. Is it a metaphysical or a philosophic poem?

SRI AUROBINDO: God knows! But the matter is that the metre of some of your lines is enough to make the hair of a prosodist stand on end in horror! I have marked all the quadrupeds you have created *in situ* – also put in the margin my five-footed emendations of them.

10.3.37

MYSELF: L has a burning sensation in the mouth and throat.

SRI AUROBINDO: What cause? She says from mouth to throat is carpeted with pepper and covered with thin pomegranate grains and she suspects an eruption there. Also you have medicated her throat but under the tongue there is fire. Surrealist Poetry is not your monopoly – even your patients write it.

S informed me the other day that her spine had already begun breaking of itself into two.

11.3.37

MYSELF: You may congratulate yourself, Sir, on this invasion of surrealism! But L is better. What have you done with the spine? I saw her still going strong; result of your operation?

SRI AUROBINDO: The spine was surrealistic – her going it strong is realistic.

MYSELF: P is much better – says bandage is now bondage!

SRI AUROBINDO: Seems much struck by Mother's force as per cure carbuncle – no gratitude to the doctor. Such is life!

MYSELF: What have you kept in store for us? Not *sandesh* and *rasagolla*![1] Will the sadhaks one by one tumble like X? Then with whom will you enjoy your Supramental? Night and day you are soaring, but don't look to see what fires your wings are throwing on our mortal frames!

SRI AUROBINDO: Romantic one! I am not soaring and soaring – I am digging and digging. "Go to the ant thou sluggard" sort of affair.

My wings are throwing no fire. If anything happens to your mortal frames it is your own kerosene stoves that are responsible.

MYSELF: Why don't you give us some word of hope? When will your Gentleman come down, if he will?

SRI AUROBINDO: Bother your words of hope. I am concerned with getting things done, (if people will kindly allow it and not be making a row all the time) – not with words.

MYSELF: I am afraid I may share no better fate. Nevertheless all your promises will be fulfilled one day, for the Divine is eternal and so is the soul.

[1] Sweets.

SRI AUROBINDO: Well, that ought to be enough.

You speak like a Daniel come to judgment. If you could only be calm like Daniel in the den of lions when these things happen, it would be all right.

17.3.37

MYSELF: Everything seems to be queer in this world, this yogic world included. When a fellow works hard at French, Medicine, trying to improve his department and himself, and thereby serve the Divine, it is bad. Too much concentration and meditation is worse. When one follows the rule "eat, drink and be merry" it is worst. I am coming to X's view that your Yoga will always be yours.

SRI AUROBINDO: There is where you miss the truth and he missed it also – he did not try to "improve himself", at any rate in any yogic way – he might try to aggrandise himself, but that is another matter. Self-aggrandisement does not save from collapse.

Well, I never heard that 'to eat, drink and be merry' was one of the paths of Yoga – unless Charvak's way is one of Yoga.

It is not my Yoga that is difficult to get the head or tail of – it is your and X's and others' views about Yoga that are weird and wonderful. If a fellow is brilliant in French and Sanskrit, you think he is a wonderful Yogi, but then it is the people who are first in the Calcutta B.A. who must be the great Yogis. If one objects to spending all the energy in tea and talk, you say, "What queer Gurus these are and what queer ideas", as if sociability were the base of the Brahman, or on the contrary you think that everybody must shut himself up in a dark room, see nobody and go mad with want of

food and sleep – and when we object to that, you say, "Who can understand this Yoga?" Have you never heard of Buddha's maxim "No excess in any direction" – or of Krishna's injunction "Don't eat too much or abstain from eating, don't drop sleep or sleep too much; don't torture the soul with violent tapasya – practise Yoga steadily without despondency. Don't abstain from work and be inactive, but don't think either that work will save you. Dedicate your work to the Divine, do it as a sacrifice, reach the point at which you feel that the works are not yours but done for you etc., etc. Through meditation, through dedicated works, through bhakti – all these together arrive at the divine consciousness and live in it"? Buddha and Krishna are not considered to be unintelligible big Absurdities, yet when we lay stress on the same thing, you all stare and say "What's this new unheard-of stuff?" It is the result I suppose of having modern-minded disciples who know all about everything and can judge better than any Guru, but to whom the very claims of Yoga are something queer and cold and strange. Kismet!

6.4.37

MYSELF: Can you satisfy my logical brain box, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: Your logical brain box, sir, is such a rule-of-thumb, Dr. Johnsonian sort of affair that it is quite impossible to satisfy. If ever you succeed in emptying the brain box of its miscellaneous contents and being mentally silent then you will discover how these things are done.

MYSELF: I want, to carry on the medical work well, the channel to open. Please don't say that I cogitate, hesitate, etc. It is precisely that that I want to avoid.

Shall I adopt the surrealist method i.e. to keep for a moment very quiet and whatever strikes first, go ahead with it; only be careful in case of poisons!

SRI AUROBINDO: There is a vegetable called "bubble and squeak". That describes the two methods you propose. "Bubble" is to go on tossing symptoms about in the head and trying to discover what they point to – that is your method. "Squeak" is to dart at a conclusion (supported by a quotation) and ram some inappropriate medicine down the patient's throat – that's X's method. But the proper method is neither to bubble nor to squeak.

MYSELF: You remember once I told you of this surrealist method and you cried – Good Lord!?

SRI AUROBINDO: I did and I repeat it. I don't want this Ashram transferred to the next world by your powerful agency.

MYSELF: But Mother once asked me to try this method i.e. instead of analysing the various possibilities and then diagnosing by elimination etc., just keep quiet and go at it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Well, so that's how the Mother's statements are understood! A free permit for anything and everything calling itself an intuition to go crashing into the field of action! Go at it, indeed! Poor it!

10.4.37

MYSELF: I wonder why you flared up at the idea of surrealist method. By 'go at it' I didn't obviously mean sending your Ashram to the next world! No, not at all. I meant only this: say a case comes with pain in the stomach. I simply keep silent, suddenly comes to me the suggestion – gastritis.

SRI AUROBINDO: I did not flare up. I was cold with horror. Doctors don't mean it when they do that kind of thing. It is not deliberate murder with them, but involuntary or, shall we say, experimental homicide.

MYSELF: Do the successful doctors get it by plenty of experiences, treating, curing, killing, etc.?

SRI AUROBINDO: Well, there are some who after killing a few hundreds, learn to kill only a few. But that is not intuition; that is simply learning from experience.

MYSELF: The funniest thing of all is that if the Divine wills why can't it be revealed to him, an effective drug in a case, medico or no medico?

SRI AUROBINDO: Why the devil should He will like that in all cases?

19.5.37

MYSELF: I am greatly surprised to hear that you have to train your ear to judge the source of Bengali poetry. Is it a question of the ear?

SRI AUROBINDO: Great Scott, man! Poetry and no question of the ear?

MYSELF:

> "Tapering fingers of an infinite Force
> Mould life's grey mire to a bright rhythm of sun:
> Through a gold network of vessels lustre-spun
> Its luminous blood into earth's darkness pours."

SRI AUROBINDO: ...What are these clumsy vessels doing there, either? Into whose kitchen have you trespassed? Cooking blood? But why not then "earth's cauldron"?

Anyhow kick the vessels out. A gold (something) network lustre-spun would sound fine, but I don't

know what something to put as I have not the least idea what you are after. Cryptic, by God!

20.5.37

MYSELF: Oh yes, you didn't understand my "vessels"? Because you forgot, Sir, that I am a medical poet. Vessels are not for cooking only – there are also blood vessels; and you should have made it out as blood was also there.

SRI AUROBINDO: Let me point out to you that vessels of gold can only mean pots and things, not blood vessels. If you say "golden vessels" it might be otherwise, provided you put a footnote N.B: physiological metaphor. For non-medical poetry veins would be better and not puzzle the layman.

MYSELF: Why the devil does A write all these things to you? Are you prescribing or are we? and what the devil is the use of his knowing the medicines and doses, pray? He could have asked me.

SRI AUROBINDO: Well, what about the free Englishman's right to grumble? This is not London and there is no "Times" to write to, so he writes a letter to me, instead of to the "Times".

MYSELF: Surely there is a twist somewhere.

SRI AUROBINDO: There is always a twist, sir, always.

MYSELF: Anyway, I won't fume nor tear my hair.

SRI AUROBINDO: Don't. Losing one's hair is always a useless operation. Keep your hair on.

MYSELF: Only tell him, please, that he ought to let us know instead of sending a boy with an empty bottle, if he doesn't want to present his honourship himself, or shall I tell him myself?

SRI AUROBINDO: Dear sir, tell him yourself, tell him

yourself. I will pat you on the back in silence from a safe distance.

11.7.37

MYSELF: My boil is paining all the time. Please do something, otherwise I can't do anything.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why so boiled by a boil?

MYSELF: The Darshan is coming next month and I can't remain in this condition and come to you with a glum face to see your glum face too!

SRI AUROBINDO: I won't be glum – I shall receive you with a cheerful grunt.

MYSELF: I am not able to keep myself steady for more than a couple of months. You will say – usual feature in Yoga. That is no comfort to me. I'm getting discouraged.

SRI AUROBINDO: Rubbish! Be a spider.

18.7.37

MYSELF: Could you whisper to me the names of a few of those lucky fellows who are enjoying the Brahman consciousness here, so that I may have a practical knowledge of what the blessed thing is like?

SRI AUROBINDO: *NO, SIR.*

How can you have a practical knowledge of it by knowing who has it? You might just as well expect to have a practical knowledge of high mathematics by knowing that Einstein is a great mathematician. Queer ideas you have!

28.7.37

MYSELF: S's pain, burning *normal i.e.* you under-

stand I hope, this normal pain?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes of course. It is the patient who is abnormal.

8.8.37

MYSELF: " New centuries open their eyes...."
You won't agree perhaps that centuries have eyes?

SRI AUROBINDO: I agree to everything and anything – let them have ears also. When one can write like that, all objections vanish.

5.3.38

MYSELF:

"Nature is apparelled with a poise
Like the wings of a drowsy bird...."

SRI AUROBINDO: Sir, if you walk through Pondicherry apparelled only with a poise, the police would arrest you at once. What would happen to Nature if she tried a similar eccentricity, I don't know.

5.5.38

MYSELF: "Life is a lonely journey...."

SRI AUROBINDO: ? For most it is a chattering peopled journey –

9.5.38

MYSELF: These two poems followed as if one piece. But I find some difference. Both seem to have a similarity in thought.

SRI AUROBINDO: They seem to me separate. Probably the broadcaster above forgot to announce "Here I begin some new stuff."

29.6.38

MYSELF: Dilipda has asked for a poem. I am sending the one enclosed but how much of your remarks should pass?

SRI AUROBINDO: If it is only for Dilip, it doesn't matter. But there's something wrong. What's "this brief mystical experience" coming in without any syntactical head or tail? Either I have dropped something or you have dropped or else missed. Please look again at my original hieroglyphs.

30.6.38

MYSELF: I am sending you 'the original hieroglyphs' of your poem. I think you have dropped one 'of' before "this brief... experience."

SRI AUROBINDO: I haven't, but as I thought you have transmagnified what I wrote – It is not mystical but mortal and not experience but existence, "this brief mortal existence".

2.11.38

MYSELF: You have forgotten a word in yesterday's poem. A blank remains. Or you can't make out your own writing. That's fine, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: The word looks like "fantasia" but I am not at all sure – it might be anything else. It is altogether irrational to expect me to read my own writing. I write for others to read, not for myself – it is their business to puzzle out the words. I try to read when I am asked, but I have to make a strong use of second sight with a mélange of intuition, reasoned conjectural speculation and random guessing.

APPENDIX

A personal note of Nirodbaran
in his recent publication: Sri Aurobindo for All Ages

I shall end this subject on a personal note. I first came to the Ashram in 1930, left after a short stay and then returned in February 1933 to join the Ashram permanently. From around April 1933 to November 1938 I wrote to Sri Aurobindo almost daily. I used to put my questions in a notebook and Sri Aurobindo usually answered them in the margin – at times, the longer answers followed at the end. Gradually I came to use three notebooks: personal, medical and literary, for I had by then been given charge of the Ashram dispensary and had to attend to the inmates' ailments; also, with his encouragement, I had started writing poetry. This long Guru-shishya correspondence has now been published (excerpts had earlier appeared in separate books and in the SABCL) almost in its entirety and in chronological order. It consists of two volumes running into 1200 pages.

When I came to the Ashram I cared very little for God and had no faith. A medical man, materialist by education, I started the sadhana without having any idea about it, as Stendhal's Fabrice joined the army in utter ignorance of what war was like. If you read my correspondence with Sri Aurobindo you will see how he took in hand this raw and sceptical fellow and carried him along the path of sadhana, changed his entire way of thinking and opened his eyes to new realms of creative poetry and literature. But in this I was not alone, for Sri Aurobindo did the same for many other disciples, although I might have been a more difficult

case! However, as our correspondence progressed, I was thrilled to notice that a new tone and manner was coming into his letters to me, a note of easy familiarity, of intimacy even, with shafts of humour lighting up the whole letter. This was certainly unusual and I did not fail to grasp my good fortune with both hands. I started writing to him much more freely and his replies continued in the same vein. It had a marvellous effect. I soon lost all my reservations, my fear and awe of him, and I wrote to him on every subject which occurred to me, putting all sorts of questions to him, and with a sense of freedom which I could not have imagined before. Friends would sometimes caution me against my boldness but Sri Aurobindo never objected nor did he rebuke me and his indulgence towards me was another way of showing his regard for individual liberty, his readiness to look at the whole life from the sublime to the trivial, and his incomparable tolerance and compassion. It is also an illustration of his way of dealing with each sadhak according to his nature and on the basis of his individual relationship with the Guru. In this way our correspondence flourished for a period of five and a half years. In the process it revealed a side of Sri Aurobindo's nature which dispels once for all the notion that he was always aloof and grave. I had written to him once: 'Your grandeur, your Himalayan austerity frightens us.' And his reply was: 'O rubbish! I am austere and grand, grim and stern! Every blasted thing that I never was! I groan in un-Aurobindonian despair when I hear such things. What has happened to the commonsense of all you people? In order to reach the Overmind it is not at all necessary to take leave of this simple but useful quality.'

As I read and read again my correspondence with

him, my abiding feeling is one of infinite gratitude: gratitude for the endless trouble he took over me even in small things, for helping, guiding and sustaining me through all my difficulties and failings in sadhana, and for sharing his divine laughter with me.

☆

IN PRESS

Sri Aurobindo's Humour: An Analysis and an Anthology

by: Jugal Kishore Mukherjee

The first chapter of the forthcoming book is published in "Sri Aurobindo Circle 48th Number [Sri Aurobindo Society Annual 1992]", released on 24th April, 1992.

Sri Aurobindo came to tell the world of the beauty of the future that must be realised.

He came to give not a hope but a certitude of the splendour towards which the world moves. The world is not an unfortunate accident, it is a marvel which moves towards its expression.

The world needs the certitude of the beauty of the future. And Sri Aurobindo has given that assurance.

27 Nov. 1971 — *The Mother*

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Information Letter

K.P. ... No. ... Date. ... JAMMU

15 August 1992 is the 120th Birth Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo and the 45th Anniversary of India's Independence Day.

"One thing only we are sure of, and one thing we wear as a life-belt which will buoy us up on the waves of the chaos..." wrote Sri Aurobindo in 1908, "This is the fixed and unalterable faith in an over-ruling **Purpose** which is raising India once more from the dead, the fixed and unalterable intention to fight for the renovation of her ancient life and glory.... She must change the rags of the past so that her beauty may be readorned. She must alter her bodily appearance so that her soul may be newly expressed. We need not fear that any change will turn her into a second-hand Europe. Her individuality is too mighty for such a degradation, her soul too calm and self-sufficient for such a surrender. If again an economical revolution is inevitable, it is because the fine but narrow edifice of her old industrial life will not allow of Swaraj in commerce and industry. The industrial energies of a free and perfect national life demand a mightier scope and wider channels. Neither need we fear that the economic revolution will land us in the same diseased and disordered state of society as now offends the nobler feelings of humanity in Europe. India can never so far forget the teaching which is her life and the secret of her immortality as to become a replica of the organised selfishness, cruelty and greed which is dignified in the West by the name of Industry. She will create her own conditions, find out the secret of order which Socialism in vain struggles to find and teach the

peoples of the earth once more how to harmonise the world and the spirit.

"If we realise this truth, if we perceive in all that is happening a great and momentous transformation necessary not only for us but for the whole world, we shall fling ourselves without fear or misgivings into the times which are upon us. India is the guru of the nations, the physician of the human soul in its profounder maladies; she is destined once more to new-mould the life of the world and restore the peace of the human spirit."

*

It was on the 8th of February 1893 that Sri Aurobindo arrived at Vadodara where he was to spend the next thirteen years. To commemorate the *centenary* of this significant event, special programmes will be organised for three days from the 8th to the 10th of February, 1993, on a national level, at Sri Aurobindo Nivas, the Master's hallowed abode at Vadodara and now also the state head-quarters of the movement in Gujarat. It is the earnest desire of the organisers that the Centres, sadhaks and devotees of Sri Aurobindo may join these celebrations. Those desiring to participate may please contact the Secretary, Sri Aurobindo Society - Vadodara Branch, Sri Aurobindo Nivas, Dandia Bazar, Baroda - 390 001, at the earliest, so that details of the programme could be sent to them in time.

Visakhapatnam (A.P.) Centre of the Society will organise a special programme from the 2nd to the 4th of September, 1992, to celebrate its Silver Jubilee, at the Assembly Hall of the Andhra University. The University has kindly consented to collaborate. Several

Centres from Andhra Pradesh will also participate in the celebration. All those who wish to attend the functions are welcome. They should write to Dr. (Mrs.) Vimala Devi, Convenor, Silver Jubilee Celebrations Committee, Sri Aurobindo Society, C/o Andhra University, Visakhapatnam - 530 003.

A Children's Camp (age-group 9 to 12 years) will be organised at our Beach Office Hall, Pondicherry, from the 28th of October to the 6th of November this year. For participation please write to the Co-ordinator, Children's Camp, Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry - 605 002.

Four new Centres of the Society are opened recently. They are at Makarabbi - 583 216 (Dt. Bellary, Karnataka), Dharwad - 580 007 (Karnataka), Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar - 751 016 (Orissa) and Jhunjhunu - 333 001 (Rajasthan).

Sri Aurobindo Circle – 48th Number (Sri Aurobindo Society Annual – 1992) is released on the 24th of April. It carries words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on different subjects in part one and articles by scholars and devotees in part two. It also contains four pictures of the Mother on art paper. It can be obtained from SABDA, price Rs. 30.00.

The Fallacy of Karl Marx by Shri Kishor Gandhi is a critical appraisal of Marxism in the light of Sri Aurobindo's social philosophy. Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department. Pages 66; price Rs. 30.00, available at SABDA, P.O. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605 002.

Dr. H. Maheshwari speaking at the Education Camp organised by the Society at Pondicherry from the 19th to 30th of May, 1992.

Education to be complete must have five principal aspects corresponding to the five principal activities of the human being: the physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic and the spiritual.

– The Mother

All is Dream-Blaze by Shri R.Y. Deshpande is the second volume of poems by the author. Divided in three sections, it contains 70 poems spread over 70 pages. Simple and sweet, the poems are marked by a lyrical quality blended with reflection. The volume is expected to receive the same warm appreciation as the author's first book of poems, *The Rhododendron Valley* received. Published by Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. Price Rs. 30.00, available at SABDA, Pondicherry - 605 002.

News from Centres

At Gulbarga (Karnataka) the Sri Aurobindo Circle, Centre of the Society, celebrated its 36th anniversary on the 24th of April. On the occasion a Kannada translation [by Shri P.M. Galgali] of the book "A Divine Life in a Divine Body" by Shri Navajata was released. A daily programme of Satsang was also organised from the 16th of April to the 6th of May.

At Pattamundai (Dt. Cuttack, Orissa) Sri Aurobindo Society Centre celebrated its 19th anniversary on the 20th of May. A flower exhibition with a display of the significances of the flowers revealed by the Mother was also arranged on the occasion.

The Bokhira (Porbander, Gujarat) Centre of the Society assisted a group of twelve students from Maharshi Dayanand College of Education, Junagadh, in their research project on "Sri Aurobindo's Thoughts on Education." Dr. Chandrakant Patel of the Centre visited the college at Junagadh and gave a talk on *Integral Education*. A video show of the Ashram Documentaries was also arranged.

Books Received

In Gujarati: Chalo Purnayoga-mā Paglā Māndie.

– Written by Ms. Jyoti Thanki and published by Sri Aurobindo Society, Vadodara. The subject, Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, is dealt with here in a simple language. Pages 221, price Rs. 21.00, available at SABDA.

In Hindi: Sri Aravind-Darshan Ki Bhoomikā.

– Translation of "An Introduction to the Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo" by Dr. S.K. Maitra. Translated by Dr. Anjanikumar Singh, this is the second edition of the work, brought out by Sri Aurobindo Adhyayan Kendra, Gorakhpur - 273 009 (U.P.). Pages 93, price Rs. 20.00, available at SABDA.

AIM Booklets

The following issues of the *All India Magazine* are now available in booklet form at Rs. 5.00 each, at SABDA.

(1) AIM Stories, (2) "I Want Only Thee", (3) Cure of Illness, (4) What is Hinduism, (5) The Supramental World, (6) What is Yoga, (7) What is Faith, (8) What is Grace, (9) What is Spirituality and What is Sadhana, (10) Self-Preparation in Yoga, (11) The Science of Living, (12) Right Attitude in Work, (13) Stories and Anecdotes from the Mother, (14) Rest and Relaxation, (15) The Supreme Divine, (16) Sri Krishna, (17) The Mother on Herself, (18) What is Desire, (19) Life and Culture of India, (20) Our India – Loftier than the Heavens.

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THE EARTH PLEDGE

The Sri Aurobindo Society, in its capacity as an International non-governmental organisation, has category B (Information and consultation) relations with two United Nations agencies viz., UNESCO, Paris, and U.N. Economic and Social Council, Geneva. The Society is one of the non-governmental organisations invited to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from the 3rd to the 14th of June 1992. Mr. Maurice F. Strong, Secretary General of this Conference has requested the Society to co-operate in giving the maximum publicity in launching the *Earth Pledge* campaign. He has invited everyone to sign the pledge as a token of personal commitment to the protection of the planet "to help the Earth a secure and hospitable home" for all, irrespective of anyone's political, cultural or religious affiliation. The text of the Earth Pledge is given below:

"Earth Pledge"

Recognizing that people's actions towards nature and each other are the source of growing damage to the environment and resources needed to meet human needs and to ensure survival and development,

I PLEDGE to act to the best of my ability to help make the Earth a secure and hospitable home for present and future generations.

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English Books

Sri Aurobindo: The Human Cycle, The Ideal of Human Unity, War & Self-Determination (6th impression), Rs. 92.00

Sri Aurobindo: More Lights on Yoga (5th imp.), Rs. 15.00

Sri Aurobindo: The Synthesis of Yoga (bd) (9th imp.), Rs. 105.00

Sri Aurobindo: Thoughts and Aphorisms (7th imp.), Rs. 12.00

Sri Aurobindo: The Upanishads (bd) (4th imp.), Rs. 75.00

The Mother: Paintings and Drawings (1st imp.), Rs. 500.00

Compilation: A New Education for a New Consciousness (1st imp.), Rs. 100.00

Compilation: Cure of Illness (AIM), Rs. 5.00

Compilation: What is Hinduism (AIM), Rs. 5.00

Compilation: Gems from Sri Aurobindo – 1 (M.P. Pandit) (4th imp.), Rs. 50.00

Compilation: I Want Only Thee (AIM), Rs. 5.00

Champaklal: Prayers and Aspirations (1st imp.), Rs. 50.00

D.D. Jadeja: The Message of the Gita (1st imp.), Rs. 10.00

K.D. Sethna: The Problem of Aryan Origins (2nd imp.), Rs. 450.00

Kishor Gandhi: The Fallacy of Karl Marx (1st imp.), Rs. 30.00

Kishor Gandhi (ed): Sri Aurobindo Circle No. 48 (1st imp.), Rs. 30.00

M.P. Pandit: Bases of Tantra Sadhana (3rd imp.), Rs. 10.00

Pavitra: On Meditation and Discipline (3rd imp.), Rs. 3.00

Dr. R.S. Agarwal: Secrets of Indian Medicine (8th imp.), Rs. 30.00

R.Y. Deshpande: All is Dream-Blaze (1st imp.), Rs. 30.00

Hindi Books

Sri Aurobindo: Durga Stotra, Rs. 2.00

S.K. Maitra: Sri Aravind-Darshan Ki Bhoomika, Rs. 20.00

Nirodbaran: Sri Aravind Ke Sath Barah Sal, Rs. 40.00

Tamil Books

M.P. Pandit: Evaru Thunvangalam, Rs. 10.00

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When thou hast the command, care only to fulfil it. The rest is God's will and arrangement which men call chance and luck and fortune.

– Sri Aurobindo

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Late, I learned that when reason died then Wisdom was born; before that liberation, I had only knowledge.

*

What men call knowledge is the reasoned acceptance of false appearances. Wisdom looks behind the veil and sees. Reason fixes details and contrasts them. Reason divides, Wisdom marries contrasts in a single harmony.

– Sri Aurobindo

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The world thinks that it moves by the light of reason, but it is really impelled by its faith and instincts.

*

Reason adapts itself to the faith or argues out a justification of the instincts; but it receives the impulse subconsciously, therefore men think that they act rationally.

– Sri Aurobindo

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The only business of reason is to arrange and criticise the perceptions. It has neither in itself any means of positive conclusion nor any command to action. When it pretends to originate or impel, it is masking other agencies.

– Sri Aurobindo

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Perceive always and act in the light of thy increasing perceptions but not those of the reasoning brain only. God speaks to the heart when the brain cannot understand Him.

– Sri Aurobindo

God speaks to the heart when brain cannot understand

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Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India: No. 22334/71

Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face.

– Sri Aurobindo

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ALL INDIA MAGAZINE
A monthly magazine of
SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY, PONDICHERRY - 605 002
Single Copy: Rs. 5.00 Annual Subscription: Rs. 48 (in India)
Sea Mail: US$ 10, Air Mail: US$ 20 (or equivalent)
© Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, Pondicherry - 605 002

Editor: K. C. Anand
Published by Kishorilal Dhandhania for Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry - 605 002, and Printed by A. R. Ganguli at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry - 605 002, India